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An Account

OF THE

Children of Silefia, &c.

The Author who writes the following Account, has these Words, " As to Matters of Religion,

" I may make bold to fay, the like was never

heard of not only fince the beginning of the

" Christian Church, but ever fince the Founda-

tion of the World flood.

Now Printed at the Delire of some Persons who think it may be agreable to the present Time.

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An Account CHT TO (Children of SIL fig

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Praise out of the Mouth of Babes ?

OR, A

Particular Account Of some Extraordinary

Pious Motions

AND

Devout Exercises,

Observed of late in many

Children in Silefia.

With a PREFACE by the late Reverend Dr. Increase Mather.

And Dr. Newman's Opinion of this extraordinary Business; who was chief Minister at Breslaw.

Mat. 16. 3. Ye Hypocrites, ye can discern the Face of the Skie; but can ye not discern the Signs of the Times?

LONDON, Printed 1708. Boston, Printed 1709.

Sold by H. Foster in Cornhill, 1741.

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TO THE W

READER.

with, having been sent to me from London, I was willing that People in these remote American Parts of the Earth should be acquainted with it, and have therefore committed it to the Printer in order to its being here Published. The History is Confirmed by so many Letters from Credible Persons, that there seems no room left to Question the Truth of what is Related. Concerning the defign

To the READER.

fign of Providence in such a strange Dispensation I shall say nothing. Deus et dies docebunt. We must leave it to GOD and Time to make the Discovery. Only this in Conjunction with several other things lately happening, which are wonderful and unaccountable, give us just ground to expect that great Changes are near unto the World.

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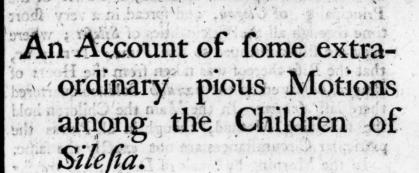
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HERE comes out in Print in Germany by one Schutz, Counsellor to the Court of Reuss, from time to time, an Account of the most Remarkable Things and Occurrences, under the Title of Fame of Europe: In the 74th Part thereof there is contained the following Account of the Children in Silesia.

As to Matters of Religion, there hath happened in Silesia, such an extraordinary strange Thing, that I may make bold to say, the like was never heard of, not only since the beginning of the Christian Church, but ever since the Foundation of the World stood. In the Beginning of this Year 1708, or a little before, the Children of both Sexes, the Eldest whereof were not past 14 Years, took a Resolution, with a Devotion uncommon to such an Age, to meet every Day Two or Three times, to pray together.

These

These religious Exercises, so far as I have been and the able to learn, began at Sprottau, a Town of the Now Principality of Glogau, and spread in a very short dismit time through all the Principalities of Silefia; where they are still continued to this Time. It may be, that the Rife thereof was taken from the Hours of Prayer, observed by the Swedish Soldiers quartered

there last Antumn. In the Main the Children hold the following Method, though in all Places the particular Circumstances are not exactly the same.

In the Morning by break of Day, these praying Children meet in the open Fields from the Towns and Villages, and make either one Circle, (where nevertheless all the Boys stand close together, and likewise the Girls;) or they make two Gircles, one of the Boys and the other of the Girls. ry Company hath chosen a Head, who generally is the Eldest and the most sensible among them. This Commander, after he hath formed the Circle, and orderly placed his young Congregation, stands in the midst of them, and fallswith the Rest to the Ground on his Face, faying the Lord's Prayer with a foft Voice. Afterwards they rife and fing fome Spiritual Hymns, whereof thefe are most commonly used : Dearest Jefus we are here : The coming of the Son of God is certainly nigh : Thou Prince of Peace, Lord Jefus Christ.

After the Singing of a Hymn, they kneel down, and their Head or chief Singer reads a Pfalm, Prayer, or some Spiritual Verses fitting these Times, and concludes with these Words : The Lord bless us and keep us : the Lord make his Face shine upon is &c.

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been and this whole Devotion is ended with the Song : the Now God be thanked all is finished; and then he hort dismisseth them after having given Orders, to return here with due Modesty and Seriousness at the usual Place and Hour. Their Hour is commonly in the of Forenogn at Eleven a Clock, and at Three in the Afternoon, This he doth generally with a loving Gravity, which feems to be above the Capacity of fuch an Age. And fince no Government can fubfift long without punishing of delinquents, he uses a Stick or a Rod, wherewith he feverely Chaftifes those that behave themselves unbecomingly; which they endure with the greatest Patience, just as if they were fworn to the Colours. 'Tis wonderful to see, what a deal of Modesty these Children express every where during the time of their Devotion: they hardly move an Eye whilft they Sing and Pray; nor are they diffurb'd at any thing, tho' they have never so many People of high and low Rank, crouding in upon 'em, to behold fo uncommon a Devotion.

Their Zeal is so great, that they often scarce fleep all Night, but impatiently long for break of Day. Neither doth the prohibition of the Magistrate or of their Parents, at all deter them from it, unless they are kept back by Force. In some Places they went themselves to the Magistrates, with great affurance and presence of Mind, earneally begging, that they might not be hindred in those their religious Exercises. It happened once in the Mountains, that a Country-Fellow locked up his Boy and Girl in the Chamber, to hinder their running

ning into the Fields and joining in Prayers with the rest of their Company. Under this Confinement, the Boy turning to his Sister; If my Father, saith he, won't let us come out, we will leap out of the Window: But, replied the Girl, might not we chance to break our Necks? No, saith he, God will prevent that, and take care of us. The Father listning all this while at the Door overheard them, and fearing an unhappy step out of the Window, might make away with his Children, resolved at last to let 'em come out into the Fields to their Praying Companions. In some Places it has been observed that Children kept in by force, fell ill by overmuch desire, and even some swounded away. Thus sar the Account of the Fame of Europe.

II. An Abstract of some Letters, giving a further Account of the Motions, stirring among the Children in Silesia.

the 16th of January, that both there and at Kummersdorff, Grunau, and Friedeberg, the Children keep their Hours of Praying and Singing three times a Day, to the Number of about 300. And altho' Orders were issued from the Magistrates, to confine the Children at Home, yet the Parents either would not, or could not hinder them, but the Devotion continued constantly with strange concours

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course of People and a general astonishment of the Spectators. Hereupon a prohibition was fent to the Children by three Officers of the Town, wherethe in they were commanded to go home upon Pain of Punishment. But they replied : They did do nothing but Pray and Sing, and for fuch a Caufe oughs not to be punished, nor forbidden to do for There are, faid they, so many disorderly doings in Ale-Houses and Brandy-Shops which go unpunish'd, and why shall 'em we be punished on account of Praying to God, that he would move the Emperor's Heart, to reffere their Churches ; to the End, that even there they might have Liberty to ferve and Worship God ?

There is also an Account of a like Devotion from the District of Sagan, to this effect: That some Roman-Catholicks, out of a Scoff or Contempt, had called the Children to their Meeting by tolling little Cow-Bells as but the Children answered : Toll as long as you will, in Time we shall get better Churches and Bells naived sent of on an

Another Letter from Hir febberg, dated the 24th of January, mentions this circumstance that the Number of the Children there, was already encreafed to One Thousand. and in the chara

At Landfour, the thief Priest with the Mayor, went to the Children then met in the open Fields, and alking the Reason, why they so frequently prayed? The answer was: That they prayed for the Emperor, to give them their Churches again. And when the Priest entered into a further debate with them, upftarts a little Boy, aShoe-makers Son, of Pice Years of Age, and lays to many ScripturePlaces before the Priest, to make good his Cause, that the latter went home, not a little confounded, and puzled at the extraordinary boldness of these young Disputers.

At Smiedeberg, the Captain caused Three Children to be imprisoned, and order'd his Men to fire upon them without Ball, but did not terrify 'em in

the leaft.

From Kauffungen, a Village in the District of Jawer, it is written by a credible Hand, that a great Number of Children in the same Place and from the Neighbourhood, were met together in a Commons or Meadow, who at every time of their convening, sung the abovementioned Hymns, and after Prayer sell stat upon their Faces, and cried: O dear God, we beseech thee, give us Peace and Churches! Being once thrust out of that Place, they made straightway into the Village, and because a Church of the Papists happened then just to be open, they went into the same, saying: Perhaps God will give us this Church too; whereupon they began to sing and to pray.

A certain Person of Quality met the Children in an open Field in their Devotion in a Village near Liegniz, who were not at all thereat put into any disorder. After Prayer was done, one of the Boys standing up, declared to the Rest, that since they confessed their Sins, and were willing to departation 'em, God would be gracious and merciful was them; and thus pronounced the Absolution lines. Minister in Orders. The Devotion being ended the Person of Quality asked the Children, what sort

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be Prayer-Books they had? They answered: they bad none, but prayed what God did put into their Hearts. However, it hath been observed in other Places, that they make Use also of Prayer-Books.

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Another Account mentions, that the Children in almost all Parts of inseriour Silesia, were betaking themselves to a more servent Devotion, than what is usual. Some of the Ministers were quiet as yet, but others bitterly exclaimed against it. In like Manner, that at Liegniz, above Three Hundred of these Children met together in the Morning at Seven aClock, at Twelve at Noon, and in the Evening at Four. They sing Three Lutheran Hymns, pray one Psalm, and read a Chapter out of the Bible. The Devotion they show, is so extraordinary, that hardly one of them moveth, whilst they are thus taken up.

There is likewise a Stirring at Pockenbeim. The Place where they meet, is a Ditch without the City-Gate. They meet at Six in the Morning, and at Three a Clock in the Asternaon. After they have sung their Hymns, they read some Prayers out of John Arndt, his Garden of Paradise, a noted Book of Prayers among the Lutherans. 'Tis wonderful to see, how forward the very little Children are, to get up betimes in the Morning, going with their Lanthorns to the Place appointed for Devotion. And because their Meeting-Place is made.

dirty by Snow, Rain, and the Concourse of ple; they have made themselves little Benches kneel on. If one of the Children comes too late, finding others singing and praying already, 'tis strange

frange to fee, with what hafte it makes up to the rest, striving and struggling to get in. A Miller, out of Compassion, has made 'em a Desk to lay their Books upon. A great Number of People flock together every Day to hear 'em, especially on Sundays, and Holy-days. They have observ'd above a Thousand Persons upon the Wall & about the Children, and many melt into Tears at fo affecting a Sight. 'Tis likewife remarkable, that Old and Young, whilft these Devotions have been set up in those Parts, have visibly changed their Lives and Conversation; so that Ale-Houses and other sinful Diversions are but little frequented, fince People have begun to attend these extraordinary Exercises, and to found that time in the great Concern of their Soul, which they used to trifle away over a Pot of Ale.

There is also an Account from Breslaw, Feb. the 4th, that in several Places thereabouts, Children of Six till Ten Years of Age, had agreed, incessantly to cry to God, that he would be pleased to put a Stop to the overslowing Wickedness of this Age. The Magistrates ordered to beat them away, but they chose another Place, and surrounded it with Rails, to perform their Prayers without Disturbance. About Three Hundred Children have already kept their Meeting every Day, and sometimes in the Asternoon stayed Five Hours together praying and singing.

Other Letters from Hirschberg say, that in Prideberg, above Three Hundred Children have had their Meetings Three Pines a Day

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In the Market-Place. The Clergyman of the that Town, who is a Papist, sent the Hangman to fler, disperse 'em and whip them away. The Man coming near the Place of Devotion, and feeing the Children in fo ferious and kneeling a Posture, he felt this Thought arising within him : Thy Business is, to punish and to restrain the Wicked; and why then shouldst thou lay band on these barmles Greatures, that do nothing but fing and pray ? So he came back into the City, highly moved at fo wonderful a Sight, and without effecting what he was fent for.

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In a Letter without Date we had, that Two Days before this Letter came away, the Children at Prausnitz, little Peterwitz, Elgud, little Knoth,

Hirchwitz, had begun the like Devotion.

In another inclosed Letter we had the following Observations: We see here with Wonder and Aftonishment how many loose idle and wicked Children shake off their wonted Corruptions, being all at once wrought into an Obedient, Quiet & Sober Temper. And whereas Young and Old are apt to find out all Manner of Shifts and Evafions. to colour over their beloved Sins, or to excuse 'em } these on the contrary accuse themselves; and de-

s plore with Tears in their Eyes the Wickedness of their former Life. Nay, it has been observ'd, that some of the worst, become now the most

promifing, and even the Heads of the reforming

Company of Children.

They write from Breflaw, Feb. 24. that there the Children did meet in numerous Companies without the Town, with Thousands of People to behold

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'em. Once there were no less than Forty Coaches ways with Gentry attending the Children. The Boys stand in one Circle, and the Girls behind them his I making another. They were hereupon ordered to repair to the Churches, and some of the Clergy appointed to pray with em. One Day they came before a Church Door desiring to be let in. The Rector bid 'em to go to St. Christophers Church, where others were already. But they told him, II. ed in it, and once to be buried here; (which the Minister wou'd hardly suffer to be done at St. Ghriflophers) therefore they wou'd go to Prayers in their own Church. But he did not only forbid 'em the Church, but caus'd 'em also to be turn'd out of the Church-yard, where they had begun to pray. Here-Church-yard, where they had begun to pray. Herevith, upon the Children asked, Why he would not suffer xam 'em to pray in the Church-yard, and yet suffered 'em enlib formerly to play with Marbles and Balls in the very The fame Place? However, they were forced to retire. From thence they went into a Place, which the he C Clothiers had hired from the Hospital to dry their Cloth in: But Mr. Rector fent thither to clear that Place likewise from this little Congregation. At last they went into a Place not belonging to the Clergy, where they perform'd their Prayers till the 6th of March. The Magistrate hearing of all this, fent for the chiefest amongst the Clothiers, (fince it were generally Clothiers Children,) and ordered them to let the Children meet once more at their usual Place, and tell 'em, they should go to Church for the future, where one of the Quirifters shou'd always

Boys But the Quirifter thewing but little Devotion them his Prayer, the Children complained of it; thereare one of the Ministers was appointed to be pretame to being too short in his Prayers.

the count, concerning these Motions.

the the Sand-Church without the Gates of the cretry, summoned a great many Children together with their Parents to appear before them. Having ramined both Parties, they received so solid and enable an Answer, that they were surprised at it. The praying Children have chosen themselves a Head, who they call Primas. Tis he, that reads to them he Chapter & the Prayers standing. They pay such that Reverence to him, as if he was a Minister; and now the Popis as well as Lutheran Children ome to join in these Prayers. They were forbidien to appear without the Gates, and the Parents of the die of the prime of the Magistrate gave Orders, that the Church should be opened and a Minister appointed to affist at their Devotion. Thus much but of the printed Account, to which we add,

IV. Certain Characters, drawn from the the foregoing Account, & evident way proving that this Work in the mail 7. d So is from a good Spirit. This is to went ken out of the aforesaid Fame of 8.7 claim rinkin Europe

MHilst I am writing this, continues the afores ed w.

Author, an Applogetick Discourse is sent in 9,
of one who writes in Fayour of the Children and it
their Way of Worship. The Characters which cance
are laid down therein are these: are laid down therein are thefe

Y. That in a Week's time this motion forces new over all the Five Principalities of Sileha, so that it to. a humane way, it was impossible, that the Children dren should move one another thereunto.

II. That to little Children of 5 or 6 Years, tever

at least of an Age full of inconstancy and ficklenes 12.

were moved in a manner as is hardly to be four heles
in any One Child, much less in so vast a Number less
3. That there is such an Harmony among hey
those Children as is hardly to be met with in an oles

Town or Village, much less in feveral Principalities 13
4. That in the main they observe the same go
Method, the they did not agree upon it before hand lace
5. That between the Hymns which they Sing slure

and Portions they Read, there is fuch a Connexion 14 and Harmony, that the Choice thereof is above theut capacity of Children.

6. Tha

6. That contrary to the usual fickleness of Chil-That contrary to the usual neckleness of Chilfromen, they express a steady Devotion and Composmit duess of mind, tho they might be disturbed sevel ways, especially by the great concourse of People,
nai 7. That very Raw people, as Country-fellows and Souldiers, looking on their Devotion, were e o 8. That many aged and grown People have been claimed; fo that they refort no more to Places of rinking and of vain diversion; shewing fince that me several signs of a sincere Reformation, attenorefaled with other good Motions,

of m o, That their fervour is so extraordinary great, which ance of their Prayers, but also in this, that they latter it not wherever they Kneel, let the Place

forest never so soul and dirty.

At 10. That no Opposition is able to divert them
Children their Devotion.

Tha

11. That they meet, though the Weather be

it. That they meet, shough the Weather be so, ever so soul.

end 12. Though some were locked up, they neverfour heless used their utmost Endeavours to meet the
mission less; and therefore according to some Letters,
ong hey leap'd out of the Windows, or crapt they the
an oles of the Stoves.

little 13. When at Ligniez, they were not suffered
same so out of the City, they met in the Markethand late, and performed there their Prayers, with an

Sing flurance uncommon in Children.
exist 14. They are not against the publick Worship,
e thout rather pray for the Restoration of Churches;

tontrai and in their Prayers, they demand nothing but whome I is agreeable to the Word of God.

- 15. That they do not pray out of bare Formal irst n sy, but for a real Reformation of their Lives, andoo of

16. They meet twice or thrice every Day, and be a

times they continued at their devotions three hour em.

17. They wkeep very good Order at their goin Impe home, taking one another by the Hand, and wall must ing Two and Two in good Manners and Deceme of it

are very quiet, and modeft.

to. The Executioner being fent to differfe 'em and finding them praying upon their Faces, went bad And with Tears in his Eyes, and told his Superiours, he filling could do them no harm, because they did do nothin Affa but pray. fect

20. Popifb Priests, that opposed the Children is the beginning, feeing their behaviour, were at la convinced of the Soundness of their Worship; an Jet them alone 1044 111

21. Other prudent and experienced persons which in the beginning looked upon it as mee Childish Pastimes, have been convinced, by the Serious conduct of the Children, that it must need proceed from an Impulse of an higher Principle The Conclusion is : That where-ever the

Characters, or at least the chief and strongest of them are found, the thing must be judged Good and Divine, at least so long as nothing appears to the

contrary.

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contrary. Neither doth it follow, that, if perhaps whome Irregularities in Tract of Time should min-le with these Spiritual Operations ; therefore the mal wift motion was not of God neither : It happens , and often, and that even to Aged People, that they begin in the Spirit, and end in the Flesh. Nor would form ces, Faults and Disorders should creep in among hour em. Or do we think it will hold, to fay: That urs. there is nothing of God in a matter subject to some goin Impersections. Nor doth it follow, that the thing wall must be bad, because some Clergymen disapprove tency of it: for it must be inquired into, whether they the have sufficient Reason for it. When the Children cried in the Temple, and said Hosanna, the Priests 'en and Scribes were fore displeased, Matth. 21. 15. bac And nevertheless the Lord looked upon it, as the ful-irs, he filling of the Scripture. Prudence must be used in this othin Affair, that on one Hand, by untimely Commen-dation, the Children might not be inspired with a en in fecret Pride on Account of their Devotion; and on the other Hand, their Mistakes be so mildly corrected, that the good Motions be not rooted out, nor their Love to Prayers quenched. In short! if nor their Love to Prayers quenched. In fhort : if fons the Children do not perform it well and godly enmee ough, and if Faults are discovered in their Prayers. the old ones may look to themselves, and see to do the better; that so they may set a more complear Patneed ciple tern before their Eyes, & fo really teach 'em, that one ought not to trifle in the great Concern of Religion. thef

It hath also been observed, that these Children are now more willing than ever, to go to School. And it is as remarkable, that about Shrove-tide,

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when aged People, by pampering their Bellies, mad a Sacrifice of their Souls to the Devil, their Childheir dren redoubled their Vigor in praying and finging in to give Check, as it were, to the head-ftrong Vicen th

of that time. So that one might justly say: the pray at that time old People turned young wanton Chil when

dren, & Children became grave and pious old Mento pr 'Tis no less remarkable, that wherever the ha Children are asked, Who put them upon thiman

Devotion, or, Who advised them to it? The able answer: No Bedy put them upon it, but they did i Pray of their own accord. If they be further asked Child What they thus did Sing and Pray for? They and some swer: For Peace, and for the Recovering of their paties. They also report, that in one of the may chiefest Cities of Silefia, a Jew's Girl getting among in Frem offered to make one of their Company; but we at the Christian Children bid her be gone, as not be and longing to them. However the young Jewes of Funwilling to be put by, Christ, saith she, Died as their well for me as for you. And by these Words the even

well for me as for you. And by these Words the evel other Party was induced to suffer her amongst them; then At which she said, She found now, that God would Old Convert and Save Jews and Heathers. So far the they

Words out of the Fame.

DR. Newman, chief Minister at Breslaw, hath their Published his Opinion of this extraordinary bugistr sines, and the he passes no very savourable Judg-assistment upon it, nevertheless his very Expression and enough to raise any ones admiration about it. H who words take as follows: GOD is pleased to vision All our Country in such a manner as was never heard of the first transfer as was never heard of the such as the such a

Forwhat a strange & unaccountable thing is it that Jude Children of a whole Country should rife, and shew

their

Chil their Disobedience therein, that they will pray nging in fpight of all Opposition; that they will pray Vicen the Eyes of all the world; & that they will the pray more than can be defired or allowed of: Chilwhereas commonly Children must be compelled Mento pray with a great deal of labour. er the hard and contrary to common Sense, that no n thiman with all his power and cunning could have been The ble to produce fuch a universal Insurrection for did Prayer, such an uncommon Zeal to Pray, that fked Children forgot their very Eating and Sleeping, y andome waking almost all Night, out of an eager imtheir patience; and some fasting till Night, that they of the may be the better able to pray. So much Patience mongin Frost and Cold, and in the most troublesome; butweather; such an unshaken Constancy, Modesty ot be and Order observed by most of them at their Hours ewels of Prayer; the ready Obedience they yield to ied of their Companions, ruling fometimes over them s the everely enough; the earnest Devotion of most of hem; them, the like whereof is scarce met with amongst would Old People; the Answers made by some, when it the they were called to an account, so that one had cause enough to wonder at their fense and understanding; hath their fending Deputations and Messages to the Mabu giftracy and to the Clergy, for having advice and udg-affistance; and at last, the never heard of zeal n and anguish, even to the swounding away of some, H when kept by Force from their Hours of Prayer. will All these things are so unusual in Youth, and so dos. strange in my Eyes that I must leave it to God's that Judgment, and suspend my own.

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Lately Publish'd,

THE Life and Christian Experience of Gartaret Rede, from her Infancy to her last Moment faithfully taken from her ow Mouth by her Mother.

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tracy and to the Clergy, for having advice and lifting a said at let, the never heard, of real



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